

Japan Christian Activity News

PUBLISHED

BY NCC J

Editor:

Shoji Tsutomu

ISSN: 0021-4353

589 September 25, 1982

STATEMENT ON THE TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY

The revisions of the history textbooks which caused so much international criticism are being accepted by South Korea and China on the basis of the Japanese government's promise to improve the allegedly distorted descriptions. The governments of both South Korea and China have indicated that they will be watching closely for Japan to take the necessary steps to fulfill this promise. But this means that the issue is not really settled. The Ministry of Education has not acknowledged any error on the part of the School Textbook Authorization Research Council. Instead it has glossed over Japan's invasion of other Asian countries and the Pacific Islands. International opinion has been critical of this attitude on the part of the Ministry of Education, but there is no indication of any real change. This leads only to justification of Japan's economic control and the threat of her military power against other Asian countries and the Pacific area.

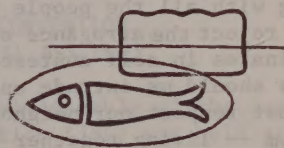
We have tried to stop Japan's moves toward remilitarization and the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine because these moves are expressions of an idolatrous worship of power. We have studied and carried out research on the problems related to peace and relationships with neighboring countries to see how they are dealt with in the textbooks. The Korea-Japan NCC's Mission Consultation has gone into these matters. But we must admit that our efforts were insufficient. Thus, we bear partial responsibility for the weakening of our people's desire for peace and the growing trend toward militarization.

Meanwhile, through our fellowship with other churches in Asia we have learned

from Asian people that the most important thing for humanity is human dignity based on mutual support and on "living together" even in a difficult time and situation. It was those people who were angry about the revision of school textbooks by the Ministry of Education. And the people of Okinawa have indicated that they, too, share the feeling of other Asians by protesting the intention of the ministry to eliminate references to the murder of Okinawans by the Japanese imperial army.

On the basis of these understandings we request that the following actions be taken:

(continued on p.2)



IN THIS ISSUE:

NCC-J TEXTBOOK STATEMENT.....	1
HONG KONG TEXTBOOK STATEMENT.....	2
BAPTIST UNION ASSMEBLY MEETS.....	2
BAPTIST CONVENTION ASSEMBLY.....	3
BOAT PEOPLE PROBLEMS IN JAPAN.....	4
DAY LABORERS AND MISSION.....	5
REPORT FROM OKINAWA.....	6
MISSIONARY TRIAL SCHEDULED.....	7
KOREAN TEXTBOOK STATEMENT.....	8
PHILIPPINE TEXTBOOK STATEMENT.....	8

EDITORIAL STAFF:

Aiko CARTER, KANZAKI Yuji, Keith SERA
KURATA Masahiko, John REAGAN

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COUNCIL Room 24, 2-3-18 Nishiwaseda, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160 Japan

NOTE: Permission to reprint is granted to all media provided that credit is given and a copy is sent to the editors.

1. That the revisions in school textbooks be corrected immediately to include the true historical facts such as Japan's invasion of other Asian and Pacific countries, and the murder of Okinawans. In the light of the fact that state control of education led to Japan's destruction in the first place, the whole textbook authorization system should be reconsidered. Moreover, in the face of the loss of friendly relations with neighboring countries, Japan must fundamentally revise its present remilitarization policy.

2. In order to promote correct relations with other Asian countries, the church should understand its war responsibility in accordance with the facts of history. To fulfill its important task of "peace-making," we must come together in faith. We must reaffirm, as Christians, the will of the people indicated in the preamble of Japan's peace constitution: "We have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world." Christians, along with all the people of Japan, must reject the arrogance of power which originates in self-centeredness. By no means should we intrude upon others. We must respect our neighbors and seek shalom -- living together in peace.

3. We wish to walk with the victims of social evils. We hope to deepen our understanding of history, sharing the viewpoint of the people with the churches of Asia.

4. We hope that the NCC Education Department, NCC-J member churches, and the Christian schools and organizations will take seriously the task of promoting such understanding, pursuing peace education with true historical insight.

We pray for God's blessing and guidance in these efforts.

National Christian Council in
Japan, Central Committee

September 16, 1982

ADDITIONAL STATEMENT FROM HONG KONG

*Received by the General Secretary of
NCC-J, the following statement was
sent by the Hong Kong Christian Council:*

Dear Friends,

As far the recent controversy over the revision of passages in Japanese textbooks concerning the invasion of Asia is concerned, we want to express the following points:

- (1) We are not wishing to perpetuate guilt feelings among the Japanese people
- (2) We feel that we learn from history and that it is dangerous to interpret historical realities according to psychological or other kinds of needs.
- (3) We do not want another major arms conflict in Asia and the past horrifying experiences may deter the next generation from launching such a conflict.
- (4) Finally, we are concerned about the revival of militarism in Japan. This, especially in the form of arms sale, poses a great threat to peace and stability in the area.

Yours Sincerely,

KWOK Nai Wang (Rev.)
General Secretary

JAPAN BAPTIST UNION GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETS

The Japan Baptist Union General Assembly met from August 24 to 26 under the moderatorship of Rev. AMANO Isao at Kanto Gakuin University Hayama Seminar House with "Church Growth" as the theme.

Over the past eight years fourteen new churches were started and 844 new members were baptized. There was an actual increase of 288 members during this eight year period. The Assembly focused its discussion on the 14th year of a 15 year plan for financial independence and the 9th year of a 10 year mission program.

Two appeals, one regarding nuclear dis-

armament and the other protesting the Prime Minister's visit to the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine, were adopted by the Assembly. (Translations follow)

Rev. NAKAMOTO Niichi
General Secretary
Japan Baptist Union

Nuclear Disarmament Appeal

The increase in nuclear arms and the possibility of limited nuclear war being triggered by the superpowers threatens all life on the earth. Strategies of "nuclear deterrence" and "nuclear umbrella" have proven to have no meaning. Peace and security cannot be sustained without the abolition of nuclear arms.

Although voices of the people protesting nuclear arms echoed loudly at the United Nation's second special session on nuclear disarmament, June 1982, the world situation has steadily grown worse. We face a survival crisis. We who still bear some responsibility for Japan's role in World War II cannot remain silent as we see Japan again heading down a road that may lead to war.

As we seek to follow God's will we must continue to pray for peace on earth and at the same time we are determined to carry out courageous actions for peace as our Christian responsibility. We appeal to world leaders to make determined efforts to halt the nuclear arms race and to halt the development of nuclear weapons.

Statement of Protest of the Visit to Yasukuni Shrine of Prime Minister

On August 15 the Prime Minister and several Cabinet members participated in the memorial ceremonies at the Yasukuni Shinto Shrine. The Prime Minister instead of declaring his participation to be of an unofficial capacity as have former prime ministers in the past, visited the Shrine silent and uncommitted as to his capacity. The only purpose of his visit and lack of a clear cut commitment was to create a domino effect whereby the "public

worship" of war heroes at the Shrine can be realized. The original purpose of the Shrine was to glorify war by enshrining the dead who fought for the emperor of Japan. In order for people not to be led once again into the tragedies of war the constitution defines the principles of the separation of religion and State and the renunciation of war. The act by the Prime Minister is unconstitutional and supports the aggressive activities of war. The textbook issue is not a problem that can be settled merely by changing the wording since the criticisms and protests by other Asian countries regarding school textbook revisions are related to the glorification of war. We protest the Prime Minister's visitation to the Yasukuni Shrine and we also request that political leaders restore the people's sovereignty, renunciation of war and respect for fundamental human rights which are the basic principles in the present constitution.

JAPAN BAPTIST CONVENTION THE 36TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The 36th General Assembly of the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC) was held at Amagi Sanso, Shizuoka prefecture, on August 18th-20th. The Assembly adopted statements protesting the Japanese government's revision of the textbooks. Furthermore the Assembly adopted statements opposing the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine and the Government's decision to designate August 15th as a national day of mourning for war dead. The JBC also invited other Baptist churches in the world to join them in prayer for the elimination of nuclear weapons from the world. The Rev. MATSUMURA Shuichi was elected as moderator and Rev. KODAMA Tadashige as vice-moderator.

The JBC protested the elimination of detailed descriptions of the atomic bombings from the textbooks. They felt that these changes were made to cover up the truth of history in order to legitimize a remilitarization of Japan. Another contention by the JBC is that

even though the next generation's education will continue to be dependent on public education the Japanese Baptist Convention has a responsibility to renew their will so they may participate in the education process as well. The Baptist Convention thus set up a special committee for church education.

Another action that was taken was the adoption of an anti-Yasukuni proclamation. The JBC's theological beliefs were the primary reasons for opposing the present movement to nationalize the Yasukuni Shrine. As for the action which designated August 15th as a national day of mourning of war dead, the JBC opposed this for four reasons: 1) this day (Aug. 15th) is directly connected with the movement to nationalize the Yasukuni Shinto shrine.; 2) it ignores the victims of other Asian countries; 3) there exists a lack of perspective as Japan's involvement in WW II was an aggressive act perpetrated against other Asian nations; 4) The day is not indicative of convictions which demonstrate a desire for no more war victims. In addition a prayer for peace was made with the JBC resolving to make every effort to liberate humanity from the tragedy and destruction of war to work towards the elimination of all nuclear problems.

As for the mission project of the JBC it was announced that for the next three years it will be under the theme of one church and one preaching point. (smaller group than a fully organized church, for preaching and meeting purposes.) The future plans of the JBC under this theme will be a promotion of preaching points, creation of a more active church and the training and nurturing of leadership. The JBC's goal is for a total of 220 churches and 30 new preaching points. At present the Japan Baptist Convention is composed of 191 single churches and 65 preaching points with a total individual membership of 25,930. #

*(Taken from the Christ Weekly
September 11, 1982.)*

FIRST MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR KOREANS MASSACRED AT TIME OF GREAT EARTHQUAKE

A memorial service was held September 1, the date of the Great Kanto Earthquake 59 years ago, on the bank of the Arakawa River in Tokyo where many Koreans were murdered and buried.

On September 1, 1923, following the destruction and fire of the earthquake, false rumors were spread that the Koreans were looting Japanese property and poisoning Japanese wells. Led by war veterans accompanied by members of youth groups, aroused Japanese killed more than 6,000 Koreans and Chinese in the Kanto area using guns, bamboo sticks, and beer bottles. According to witnesses some of the Koreans were taken to the riverbank and machine gunned.

The memorial service started when Ms. KINUTA Sachie, an elementary school teacher, was collecting materials for a lesson about the river, and heard of the incident of the murdered Koreans. Under her leadership high school teachers, university professors and people living in the Arakawa River area came together and organized a group to gather information and commemorate the death of the Korean victims.

The ceremony was attended by approximately 250 from the surrounding area including adults and junior high students. The first attempt to excavate the site and recover the remains of those killed and buried there was unsuccessful. Excavation of the site will continue. #

CONTINUING PROBLEMS FOR BOAT PEOPLE

The Socialist Republic of Viet Nam continues to face acute economic difficulties because of the failure of its agricultural policy, because of an increase in its military budget and because of the discontinuation of international aid from advanced nations. Hence, the boat people continue to flee Viet Nam.

On June 27, 1975, boat people were for the first time accepted by Japan. 6,183

people have reached the shores of Japan by August 31, 1982. Of these, 2,029 individuals are still in Japan seeking permanent settlement. Since the 26 institutions operated by three religious groups and the Red Cross have a total capacity of only 1,600, the former boat people are living in very crowded and difficult conditions.

One of these is Mr. T., 37 years old. As a result of injuries received while fighting alongside U.S. military forces against the Viet Nam Liberation Front in December of 1974 the left side of his body is paralyzed. His wife and child left him, for he could no longer support them, and he resorted to begging on the streets while living with his brother's family. When his brother and three children resolved to flee the country they agreed to take Mr. T. along.

On September 3, 1979 they escaped from Viet Nam by boat and were picked up by a Japanese ship after two days. On September 17 they arrived at Singapore but were given only temporary status there since they had been picked up by a Japanese vessel.

On March 3, 1980, they were sent by plane to Japan's Narita airport and the next day were transferred to the displaced persons center in Hamamatsu. Immediately Mr. T. was taken to the hospital for medical treatment. Although his condition has improved his left side remains paralyzed and he is unable to support himself.

In January, 1981 Mr. T.'s brother's family were allowed to immigrate to the USA. Mr. T.'s only dream now is to be able to live with his nephews and niece in the USA. Although he has been rejected three times by the US Embassy on the grounds that he does not qualify under any of the legal requirements for admission to the U.S., he keeps making applications hoping to obtain immigrant status for humanitarian reasons. He also does not qualify for Japan's immigrant status which requires that an individual be healthy, be capable of holding a job, and have a guarantor as well.

There are many opinions regarding the

protection of handicapped refugees, but what is important is to maintain their human dignity. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees accepts handicapped people within the framework of family units. Some of the European countries such as Belgium and Denmark have utilized this idea for the movement "Ten or More", which affirms that it best for all concerned if the handicapped are able to live with their families.

Japan's policy for the refugees should be based on respect for human dignity. Present policy seems to be the result of international pressure and criticism.

MURATA Tetsuyasu
Director of Aikoryo for
Viet Nam Refugees, Seido
Social Welfare Institution.
Hamamatsu-shi, Shizuoka

DAY LABORERS AND MISSION IN YOKOHAMA

In 1970 Rev. MASU Iwao was appointed pastor of the Yokohama Baptist Church, as the first full-time pastor since World War II. Built in 1873 and the second oldest Protestant church in Japan, the Yokohama Baptist Church is located in the midst of the Kotobuki area (similar to the Kamagasaki area in Osaka) where many day laborers live. For these day laborers finding work and food, and a place to sleep are a daily recurring difficulty. Though Kotobuki has a population of about 5,000, there are only 200 families in the area, for most of the population are single men. The following is a summary translation from a report written by Mr. Masu.

When I was assigned to the church there was a class for children led by church youth. The young people requested the use of the church building for neighborhood children and held classes twice a week for about 100 children. Through these classes my wife and I gradually came to know more about the people and the community.

The church's community involvement began in 1965 when the city built a two story building and case workers were

brought in to try to meet community needs. In 1972 when a third and fourth floor were added, the classes for children moved to the third floor. Soon it was suggested that the church building be used for a lunch program for children during summer vacation, and community mothers and fathers volunteered to work in the lunch program which was a great success. Some of those helping in the lunch program, which continued until 1979, were single male day laborers who enjoyed spending time with the children.

In 1973 during the economic recession I kept the church open and made myself available whenever people came. Since alcoholism was a serious community problem, many who came to the church were very drunk. Many also came to beg money.

One evening a man came in and I wondered what to do since my pockets were empty. The man hesitantly said, "Please take this money." This was the first time that money had been offered to me by a visitor to the church. He told me that he had read about tithing in the Bible and was making an offering of his gambling winnings! He brought a tenth of his income regularly after that episode.

Another example of compassion occurred on a cold winter night. A young man, a regular participant in our Bible study, brought in an older handicapped man, who spent the night in the church. The next morning the young man took the older man to the welfare office. My heart was filled with joy because of the lesson of compassion I learned from this young man.

Another church member who liked folk songs and I started a Friday night Bible class where we served cookies and tea. About 20 to 50 attended the class which has since been incorporated into a church Bible study class.

In 1975 the city stopped providing aid for the needy even though the recession continued. The church was then used for various meetings such as a campaign to oppose the city administration's

plan to transfer the case workers from the Kotobuki area to the city welfare building.

In 1978 I was asked to head a community effort to set up a medical clinic in our area. Within two months we had 2,000 signatures requesting a medical clinic. In July of 1979, the Kotobuki medical clinic was started with a doctor, two nurses, a pharmacist and a case worker. A program for alcoholics is staffed by Roman Catholic sisters.

The Yokohama Baptist Church continues to minister to human needs in the Kotobuki area.

For more information contact: The Yokohama Baptist Church, 2-5-8 Kotobukicho, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231. Tel. (045) 681-8926.

REPORT FROM OKINAWA

On September 14-15 I visited Naha, Okinawa to discuss with pastors there a plan for the future Peace Center on Okinawa.

On the evening of the 14th about 8,000 citizens gathered in the city park to protest to the Ministry of Education the recent elimination from school textbooks of the fact that civilians were killed by the Japanese imperial army during the battle on Okinawa. The specific purpose of the meeting was to send off 16 delegates from Okinawa taking a textbook-petition with 100,000 signatures to the Ministry of Education in Tokyo and to propose that textbooks give children the facts of the horrors of war.

Okinawa newspapers have continued to report on the Okinawa battle, including the reports of witnesses who saw Okinawans killed by the army. These articles bear witness to the fact that the people of Okinawa now feel a sense of crisis caused by the increase in both the U.S.A. and the Japanese Defense Force presence on Okinawa.

In addition to the citizens' meeting

On the 14th the Okinawa Prefectural Assembly adopted unanimously a resolution demanding that the deleted accounts of the massacre of Okinawans by Japanese troops be restored to high school textbooks. However, the Ministry of Education has not responded.

On September 15th the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) Okinawa District's Committee for Social Issues organized a program attended by sixty. The morning session included an address by Prof. ISHIHARA Masaie of Okinawa International University, who detailed the ways civilians were sacrificed in the battle on Okinawa. Then the participants visited various sites of the battle including the underground coral cave where many people were killed.

A Peace Center on Okinawa could be a strong witness to peace in the midst of the Okinawa people.

SHOJI Tsutomu
NCC-J General Secretary

TRIAL OF MISSIONARY SCHEDULED

Ronald FUJIYOSHI, who was indicted on June 16 of this year for refusing to be fingerprinted upon applying for his Alien Registration Certificate, will go to trial on September 27 at the Kobe Summary Court.

Under the Alien Registration Law, all foreigners aged 16 or over residing in Japan for more than a year are required to be fingerprinted. Therefore, every five years they are re-fingerprinted.

An American missionary working with the Korean Christian Church in Japan, Fujiyoshi opposes the fingerprinting system since it violates not only his individual human rights, but the human rights of Koreans living in Japan. Fujiyoshi has spent much of his nine years in Japan working with Koreans in Osaka's Ikuno Ward.

Fujiyoshi's case is the second fingerprinting case to go to court. KANG

Pak's case began on April 15 in Okayama. The next hearing will be on October 15.

With the refusal of seven more Koreans in the last two months bringing the total to more than twenty, the movement to oppose fingerprinting when registering has presented a serious challenge to the Japanese government. Even members of the Diet have criticized the government in light of the June 1979 ratification of the International Covenant on Human Rights.

Fujiyoshi points out that his refusal is based on two points. One is that fingerprinting is a clear infringement of human rights. The only Japanese who are fingerprinted are those who have broken the Japanese criminal law. Since the history of fingerprinting has been associated from the beginning with the investigation of criminals, to require anyone to be fingerprinted in Japan is to make them feel degraded. Second, fingerprinting is a symbol of the Japanese government's assimilation policy toward long-term Asian residents in Japan, the large majority of whom are Koreans. Eighty percent of the 700,000 Koreans were born here, but this does not automatically entitle them to the right of Japanese citizenship. Koreans can become naturalized citizens, but they are required to legally adopt a Japanese name. The Japanese law places these long-term aliens in such an insecure position that it coerces them to naturalize, giving up their ethnic heritage. It is this non-recognition by the Japanese of Koreans to live as equals in Japan with pride in their history, language, and names that constitutes the violation of their basic human rights.

On the 27th Fujiyoshi's lawyers will request a change from the Summary Court to the District Court on the basis that this case is a violation of human rights and not just a simple criminal case.

For further information contact:

John H. McINTOSH
Tatsumi-Nishi 4-chome 237-4
Ikuno-ku, Osaka, Japan 544
Tel. (06) 752-1813

TEXTBOOK REVISIONS - A STATEMENT FROM KOREA

The Korean Churches believe that the textbook revisions that are taking place in Japan are a part of that country's rightest resurgence which for many years has been led by the Liberal Democratic Party.

In 1965, when Korean-Japan relations were normalized, the Korean Churches opposed the negotiations because Japan lacked any attitude of repentance for her past deed and because the Korean government maintained no pride in democratic institutions.

The Korean Churches have emphasized these concerns and have discussed modes of cooperation between the Korea and Japan National Christian Councils which have led to four consultations since 1973.

The Korean Churches believe that the textbook issue is not only a problem for Japan but is a problem for Korea and all of Asia as well. The history of Japan as it is being written today is being changed as part of a policy of remilitarization. This fact is a very serious challenge to us all. The churches in both Korea and Japan, witnessing to God's Word, understand these course of events as informing the basic premise of future church-to-church relations. It is urgent that this very basic problem be dealt with by securing even deeper relations.

1. It is our suggestion that the church leaders of Korea and Japan meet together as soon as possible to discuss specific plans for future action in relation to this common problem.
2. For this purpose it is necessary that information and resources be exchanged and that a plan for implementation of such be set up.
3. In order to build solidarity among the churches of Asia, the cooperation and assistance of the Christian Conference of Asia is sought.

September 13, 1982

The National Council of Churches in Korea
The Rev. KIM So Young, General Secretary

(Translation by a.c.)

AND THE PHILIPPINES

We are deeply concerned about the current moves of the Japanese authorities to revise Japanese history books.... We believe that intellectual honesty in the objective presentation of historical events will develop among students a critical view of the past and faithful interpretation of its facts and events so that their generation and the future generation can look back to the past with respect and integrity...

The Churches in the Philippines and Japan share a common role of Christian mission in Asia. It is on the basis of our understanding of this mission that we express our deep concern and strong support for the NCCJ's posture on the changing of the textbooks on Japanese history. And our support upholds the essence of the Christian mission: to maintain at all times truth and justice in the total life of the individual and more so in the systems of society.

National Council of Churches in the Philippines